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ABSTRACT

This report provides an evaluation of the Prevention Initiative Program's second-funded year in the Chicago Public Schools. The program's purpose was to reduce school failure by providing health and social services to young families, improving parenting skills, and assisting young mothers to complete high school. The program served pregnant or parenting teens who had dropped out of Tesla Alternative High School, and those who attended Simpson Alternative High School for Pregnant Girls. The program featured case management, in-home parenting sessions, and group-based parent training sessions. The evaluation was based on the observation of program activities, surveys from participating parents, interviews with service providers, and review of program attendance and activity records. The Tesla program developed an Individual Service Plan for each Family. Thirty-seven of 60 mothers returned to school and 40 families demonstrated improvement in parenting skills, suggesting that home visits made by the social service providers had a positive effect on the mothers. Simpson High School assessed the project's success by having each student prepare and display a Parenting Product Portfolio that promoted awareness of good parenting practices. Peers participated in evaluating the portfolios. Recommendations to improve delivery of services to young families through the program included providing home-based instruction from both schools, designing and administering pre- and post-evaluation instruments for participants to complete in order to better assess the outcomes of the program, and providing opportunities for parent-child interactions to enhance parenting skills and teach child development. The program highlighted a vital need in the community to reach young teenage mothers through the high schools and provide parenting training and support. (Includes the Illinois State Board of Education form for Demographic information.) (AA)



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FINAL EVALUATION REPORT PREVENTION INITIATIVE PROGRAM

Fiscal 1994



\$ 023361

CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ARGIE K. JOHNSON

Seneral Superintendent of Schools

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PREVENTION INITIATIVE PROGRAM

Fiscal 1994

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CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

February 1995



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PROGRAM FACTS

Title: Prevention Initiative Program

Program Purpose: Reduce school failure by providing health and social services to young

families, improving parenting skills, and assisting young mothers to

complete high school.

Program Features: Case management, in home parenting sessions, and group-based parent

training sessions.

Funding Source: Illinois Initiatives for Educational Reform.

Funding Level: \$104,430.

Funding Period: September 1993 - August 1994.

Eligibility: Pregnant or parenting teens who had dropped out of Tesla Alternative High

School. Pregnant or parenting teens who attended Simpson Alternative

High School for Pregnant Girls.

Location: Tesla Alternative High School for Girls and Simpson Alternative High

School for Pregnant Girls.

Age Level Served: Teen mothers or mothers-to-be.

Staffing: A nurse, one health aide, one parent advocate, one child development

specialist, two teachers.

Number of Participants: 131 mothers.

First Year of Funding: 1993.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an evaluation of the Prevention Initiative Program's second-funded year in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS). The evaluation of fiscal year 1994 (FY 94) is based on the observation of program activities, surveys from participating parents, interviews with the service providers, and review of program attendance and activity records. Research, Evaluation and Planning staff analyzed the collected data according to the program objectives and intervention strategies.

The FY 94 Prevention Initiative Program was a cooperative effort started last year between Tesla Alternative High School for Pregnant Girls and The Woodlawn Organization (TWO). The program served pregnant or parenting individual who had dropped out of Tesla. The 1994 program at Tesla focused on inhome parent training and intensive case management services for 60 high-risk teens and families. Simpson Alternative High school for Pregnant Girls joined the program in 1994 and enrolled 71 girls. The Simpson Program conducted extended-day sessions to teach pregnant adolescents parenting and entrepreneurial skills.

The program started late in the fall, and, according to records and observations, did not obtain consistent attendance at either school. Many of the participants were enrolled in the late spring so they did not have the opportunity to participate in many sessions. Observations and records showed staff from both schools used class sessions, workshops, field trips, and small-group discussions to cover a wide range of topics.

Tesla/TWO developed an Individual Service Plan for each family. According to Illinois State Board of Education forms, 37 of 60 mothers returned to school and 40 families demonstrated improvement in parenting skills. This suggests that the home visits made by the social service providers had a positive effect on the mothers.

Simpson High School assessed the project's success by having each student prepare and display a Parenting Product Portfolio that promoted awareness of good parenting practices. Peers participated in rating the portfolios.

Some recommendations to improve delivery of services to young families through this program follow.

- 1. Provide home-based instruction from both schools
- 2. Design and administer pre- and postevaluation instruments for participants to complete in order to better assess the outcomes of the program
- 3. Provide opportunities for parent-child interactions that can enhance parenting skills and teach child development

Intervention is critically needed to provide support services and parenting skills to young parents. The CPS Prevention Initiative Program is a good beginning in overcoming some of the ravages of poverty that presently exist in these communities.



INTRODUCTION

The Chicago Public Schools received an Illinois State Prevention Initiative grant for the 1993-94 school year which continued to provide young mothers of infants and toddlers with parenting skills and needed social services. Two alternative high schools for pregnant girls implemented the project.

The program at the Tesla Alternative High School for Pregnant Girls located on the central south side of Chicago was a cooperative effort started last year between Tesla and The Woodlawn Organization (TWO). The program served pregnant or parenting teens who had dropped out of Tesla. It focused on in-home parent training and intensive case management services for 60 at-risk teen families.

The program at Simpson Alternative High School located on Chicago's near west side conducted extended day sessions to teach pregnant adolescents parenting and entrepreneurial skills. Seventy-one girls were enrolled during the course of the year.

Both schools served families who resided in an Infant Mortality High Risk Area. The infant mortality rate in Chicago for the identified areas is about 20 percent with a teen pregnancy rate of nearly 26 percent. Almost 15 percent of these infants are born with low birth weight. More than 20 percent of teen parents between the ages of 16 and 19 are high school dropouts. Both areas served neighborhoods where more than 91 percent of the families were low income and 100 percent were African American.

This report provides an evaluation of Prevention Initiative's second funded year in the Chicago Public Schools. The evaluation of FY 94 is based on the observation of program activities, surveys from participating parents, interviews with the service providers, and review of program attendance and activity records. Research and Evaluation staff analyzed the collected data according to the program objectives and intervention strategies. Tesla/TWO and Simpson School described these goals in their proposal for funding.

POPULATION SERVED

To be eligible for the program offered by Tesla/TWO, teens had to be pregnant or parents of children under the age of three; live within the communities of Woodlawn, Greater Grand Crossing, South Shore, Englewood, and Roseland (state identified areas of severe poverty); and not be already receiving comprehensive services such as access to prenatal care, well-child health care and other parent-child services. Tesla enrolled girls who had experienced continued truancy from school, and therefore were not receiving parental support and training on an ongoing basis.

The Prevention Initiative Program at Simpson Alternative High School was offered to all pregnant or parenting students and to their parents or guardians. By including members of the extended family, more of the infants' actual caregivers were given an opportunity to receive training in parenting skills. Simpson is located in a severe poverty area, although girls can attend from all over the city.



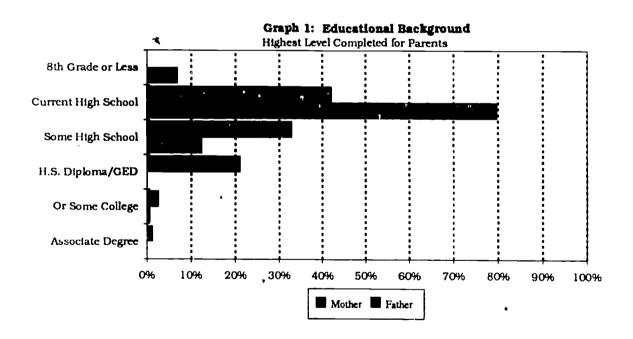
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Demographics

On the basis of data from !!linois State Board of Education (ISBE) Form -- Parts 1--3 completed by the Tesla and Simpson staff, intake forms were completed for 131 young women and their families. The mean age of the girls who participated was 17 years. Twenty-eight girls were 18 or older, 21 were not yet 16 years, and two girls were 13. One hundred twenty-eight participants were "Black, Non-Hispanic" and three were Hispanic. (See Appendix.) Almost all of the participating girls lived in an extended family setting.

Education/Schooling

The data reported regarding the educational background of the target population (all female) also included information about the fathers of their children. Seven percent of the mothers had completed eighth grade or less, while 80 percent were currently high school students. Twelve percent had some high school, but no diploma, and one young woman had some college but no degree. Information was available on 76 fathers. Of that number, 42 percent were currently enrolled in high school, which was double fast year's percentage. Thirty-three percent had high school experience but had not received a degree, while 21 percent had either received their high school diploma or GED certification. (See Graph 1.)

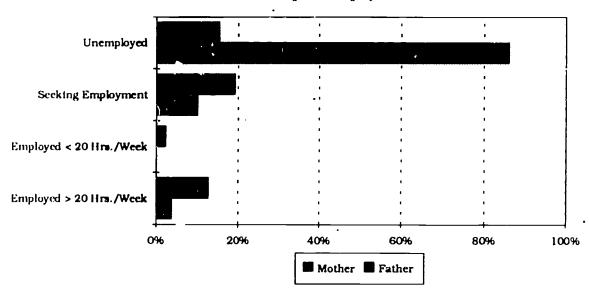


Employment/Income

Employment status was presented using four categories distinguishing the unemployed from those employed part-time or full-time, and differentiating between the unemployed who were seeking employment and those who were not (including here the category of "homemaker"). Of the 131 mothers represented, 86 percent were neither employed nor seeking employment. Of the 76 fathers represented, 36 percent were unemployed, and not seeking employment. (See Graph 2.)

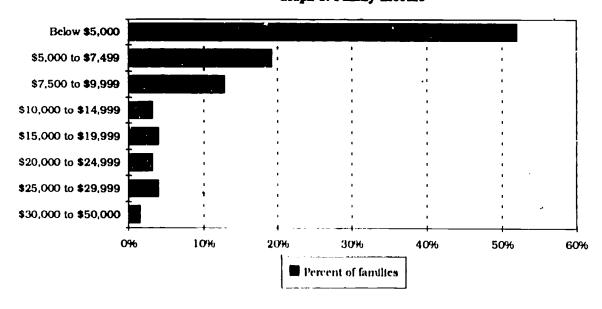


Graph 2: Employment Status



Family income was measured before taxes, and of the 131 families represented, 51 percent earned less than \$5,000 annually, 10 percent earned between \$5,000 and \$7,500, 13 percent between \$7,500 and \$15,000, 14 percent between \$15,000 and \$30,000 and the remaining 3 percent earned between \$30,000 and \$45,000. (See Graph 3.) These figures are not completely reliable, however, because there was some confusion about the meaning of "family income." In some cases the mother's income may have been reported instead of the extended family's incomes.

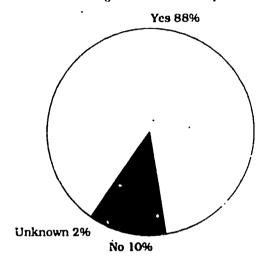
Graph 3: Family Income





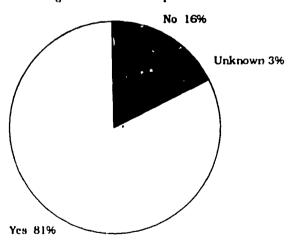
Financial Aid was received by most of the families -- Aid to Families with Dependent Children (A.F.D.C.) was received by 88 percent of the families. (See Graph 4.) Eighty-one percent received Public Aid. (See Graph 5.)

Graph 4: Children Receiving A.F.D.C.
Percentages based on 131 responses



Graph 5: Families Receiving Public Aid

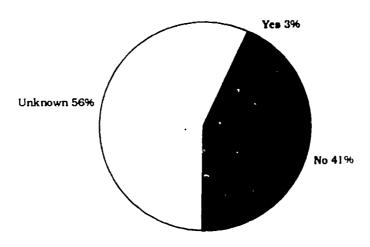
Percentages based on 131 responses





Only 3 percent of the families received Social Security Income (S.S.I.), although a large number (56 percent) was unknown. (See Graph 6.)

Graph 6: Families Receiving 8.8.I.
Percentages based on 131 responses



INTERVENTION

Both Tesla and Simpson offered weekly sessions covering a variety of topics that included child development, parenting skills, and family issues. Extended family members (grandmothers and significant others) were encouraged to attend regular and special activities at both schools. Both Tesla and Simpson presented information on child health and nutrition, child development, family issues, and parenting skills. There were also special events that included a book and toy-lending library, grandparent sessions, and personal growth activities. Some of the agencies used to provide additional services were Women, Infants and Children (WIC), 111 families referred; Healthy Kids Program, 80 families referred; Catholic Charities; and the Salvation Army.

Although the overall program goals were the same, Tesla and Simpson implemented their programs differently. Tesla, in conjunction with the Woodlawn Organization, provided home-based training sessions and developed Individual Family Service Plans (IFSP) for each of their teen parents. At Simpson, girls were taught entrepreneurial skills as well as parenting skills.

Tesla/Woodlawn Organization's Program

The Tesla/Woodlawn Organization Prevention Initiative Program met Wednesday aftermoons after school for two hours and focused on intensive case management services for 40 high-risk teens and families. An additional 20 families were carried over from the previous year. As they exited the program, others were enrolled. The targeted population was pregnant and/or parenting teens who had been determined to be at risk of school failure as defined primarily by Tesla Alternative High School. Participation of significant



others in the parent training was supported and encouraged. The program goals were to provide participants with opportunities to improve parenting skills, increase knowledge of child development, practice proper child care, and strengthen self-esteem. A case management service plan was developed for each participant at Tesla/TWO. The teen mother and her case manager developed the plan together. This individualized program consisted of home-based parent training sessions and group-based parent training in the parent training laboratory at Tesla. The *Teenage Parent Nurturing Program* curriculum manual, developed by Dr. Stephen J. Bavolek and Juliana Dellinger-Bavolek was used during the home visits. In addition to providing parent training activities, a major aim of the plan was to overcome barriers to school attendance.

Simpson's Program

Simpson implemented the Simpson Health Education Project (S.H.E. Project). The students met twice a week for an hour and a half after school, over a 30-week period. The objectives of the S.H.E. Project were to improve students' parenting skills, enhance intergenerational parenting communication, and introduce entrepreneurial skills. Girls attended either computer literacy training or fashion merchandising in addition to parenting classes.

Weekly sessions provided opportunities for the girls to learn parenting skills and make a variety of arts and crafts projects such as baby clothes, layette items, buttons, magnets, pillows, etc. These items were then displayed and sold in a showcase in the school. Parents of the students were encouraged to attend the meetings and workshops.

In addition, Simpson's principal hoped to improve staff's expertise of teaching techniques in implementing the Illinois State Board of Education's Public School Recognition System. Consequently, Simpson staff, tried new innovative techniques to teach "hands on" classes in sewing, use of computers, and parenting skills.

On the day one evaluator visited, the participants were practicing songs and readings for a Mother's Day program. The goal for this activity was to build self-esteem through learning to perform in front of an audience.



EVALUATION RESULTS

Prevention Initiative evaluators examined multiple data sources to determine how closely each provider achieved program objectives. Evaluators used on-site observations, parent questionnaires, staff interviews and information received from ISBE-A-D forms.

Observations and records showed staff from both schools used class sessions, workshops, field trips and small-group discussions to cover a wide range of topics including: child development, parenting skills, family issues, and ways to increase self-esteem. According to records, attendance at class sessions for both schools was sporadic. Attendance during the winter months dropped appreciatively. While the staff in both schools tried to make classes interesting, observers noticed the participants often talked with each other or were indifferent to the subject matter during the sessions.

A variety of types of teaching methods were tried at Simpson to improve the staff's expertise, following project goals. Workshops, videos, student presentations, and field trips were some of the alternative ways of presenting material that were used. To enhance the intergenerational parenting communication, grandparents were invited and often two or more grandmothers were in attendance at the meetings. According to staff interviews, the participants were pleased to have their mothers there, and it helped to have the families involved in learning and sharing together. The grandmothers also assisted the staff during the sessions in a variety of ways.

Tesla/TWO reported all families received home visits, although the number of visits each family received varied because some families were not available at the scheduled time. According to the results on the ISBE-A-D forms, the mothers showed improvement in many skills. Program staff completed the forms indicating changes that occurred in participants' behavior/and or attitudes. The most frequently noted changes were as follows.

An increase in self-esteem and knowledge of appropriate parenting skills (73 percent of participants)

Changes in how the young moms interacted with their children (65 percent)

Increased awareness of health and nutritional needs (60 percent)

Knowledge of their rights and responsibilities as parents (60 percent)

More positive attitudes toward school/education (54 percent)

Increased awareness of children's physical and developmental growth (54 percent)

Individual Family Service Plan Goals (IFSP) were developed for all 60 families Tesla/TWO served. Tesla/TWO reported that 40 families improved parenting skills; 37 mothers returned to school; and in three cases family interaction improved.

One of the ways staff at Simpson High School assessed the project's success was to examine the student's creation of positive parenting products that promoted good parenting awareness. Each student prepared and displayed a Parenting Product Portfolio at a culminating School Community Student Success Showcare. Peers participated in rating the portfolios.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Prevention Initiative Program in the Chicago Public Schools was designed to provide parent training in home and in school to students at Tesla Alternative High School; and in school to the students who were attending Simpson Aiternative High School. The program started late in the fall, and, according to records and observations, did not obtain consistent attendance at either school. Many of the participants were enrolled in late spring so they did not have the opportunity to participate in many sessions.

Although different types of presentations were tried by the teachers, often there was not much interest on the part of the young mothers to participate. At Simpson, they were given a stipend and a snack at the end of each session, which may have been an incentive to attend the meeting. At Tesla, it appeared the topic of the day was often decided by participant input.

Baby-sitting was a big concern expressed by many of the mothers. Few accommodations were made to assist the mothers with child care for their children. In addition, there was no systematic method at Simpson of teaching positive ways for mothers and babies to interact. Because the mothers were already at school without their babies, it was difficult to plan activities together.

Tesla/Two program results (more than half the mothers returned to school and two-thirds demonstrated improvement in parenting skills) suggest that the home visits made by the social service providers had a positive effect on the mothers.

Because all of ISBE's evaluation forms are completed by gaff, evaluators in Chicago's Department of Research, Evaluation and Planning developed pre- and postparticipant questionnaires. The post-questionnaires were not completed because of different exiting dates of the mothers. According to the ISBE forms, many positive changes in behavior and attitudes occurred, but there was no indication as to how these conclusions were reached.

Intervention is critically needed in these communities to provide services and parenting skills to young parents. The need for change in the program design has been addressed and should provide better results. Some additional recommendations follow:

- 1. Provide home-based instruction from both schools
- 2. Design and administer pre- and postevaluation instruments for participants to complete in order to better assess the outcome of the program
- 3. Provide opportunities for parent-child interactions that can enhance parenting skills and teach child development.

The Prevention Initiative Program can meet a vital need in the community to reach young teenage mothers through the high schools and provide parenting training and support. Both schools need to reexamine their programs and try to find additional ways to reach this population and assist them in parenting their infants.



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APPENDICES



ISBE ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION Planning, Research end Evaluation 100 North First Street Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001

1993-1994 PREVENTION INITIATIVE PROGRAM Demographic Information

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7.	RAC	E/ETHNIC ORIGIN							Some high school, no diploma
		White, Non Hispanic		-					High School diploma/GED
		Black, Non Hispanic							Some vocational or trade school
		Hispanic							Completed vocation/trade school program
		Asian/Pacific Islander							Some college, no degree
		American Indian							Associate degree
		Multiracial							Bachelor's degree
		Other (specify)							Graduate or professional school degree

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Name of Person Completing Form

Telephone Number

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1993-1994
PREVENTION INITIATIVE PROGRAM
Demographic Information

INSTRUCTIONS: Please complete one form per family at the end of the school year and return by August 31, 1994.						
IAME OF PROJECT	REGION-COUNTY-DISTRICT CODE					
What changes in the adults behaviors and/or attitudes occurred as a result of participation in the Prevention initiative Program: (Check all that apply.)						
Attitudes toward their children	Awareness of alcohol/drug abuse programs					
☐ Knowledge of appropriate parenting skills	Knowledge of existing services					
Time spent Interacting with their children	Utilization of services					
Read to the child	Increase in self esteem					
Language/literacy activities used with children	Acquired better housing					
Awareness of child physical and developmental growth	Enrolled in Adult Education class					
Attitudes toward school/education	Enrolled in Vocational Education class					
Awareness of child's health/nutritional needs	Enrolled in GED class					
Mowledge of their rights and responsibilities as parents	Acquired high school diploma					
Awareness of parent advocacy/support groups	Acquired a job					
Enrollment in alcohol/drug abuse programs	Cthers (specify)					

Please list any comments you may have received from parents.

For further information contact:

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